

IN THE CLAIMS

11. (currently amended) A method for manufacturing a bearing element comprising the steps of:

forming a plurality of layers from a combination of a first material and a second material, wherein a first of ~~said the layers~~ includes an exterior surface and an interior surface, the first layer formed from a plurality of materials comprising ~~at least one of~~ polytetrafluoroethylene fibers, and at least one of glass fibers, and carbon fibers, and combinations thereof, wherein the exterior surface includes a higher concentration of polytetrafluoroethylene fibers and the interior surface includes a higher concentration of the at least one of glass fibers and carbon fibers, and wherein a second of ~~said the layers~~ is formed against the first layer and is formed from a ~~single-material~~ comprising at least one of glass fibers and carbon fibers, such that the first layer comprises the first material, the second layer comprises the second material, and the third layer comprises the first material and wherein a third of the layers includes an exterior surface and an interior surface, the first layer formed from a plurality of materials comprising polytetrafluoroethylene fibers, and at least one of glass fibers and carbon fibers, wherein the exterior surface includes a higher concentration of polytetrafluoroethylene fibers and the interior surface includes a higher concentration of the at least one of glass fibers and carbon fibers;

forming the bearing element from the plurality of layers, wherein each layer is formed from at least one of weaving materials and braiding materials;

plasma etching each of the bearing element plurality of layers to facilitate enhancing bonding between adjacent layers; and

impregnating each of the bearing element plurality of layers with a polyimide resin comprising polytetrafluoroethylene powder.

12-13. (canceled)

14. (currently amended) A method in accordance with ~~Claim 13~~ Claim 11 wherein said step of forming the plurality of layers further comprises the steps of:

forming the first layer from a woven mat of the first material;

forming the second layer from a woven mat of the second material; and

forming the third layer from a woven mat of the first material.

15. (currently amended) A method in accordance with ~~Claim 13~~ Claim 11 wherein said step of forming the plurality of layers further comprises the steps of:

forming the first layer from a braid of the first material;

forming the second layer from a braid of the second material; and

forming the third layer from a braid of the first material.

16. (cancelled)

17. (currently amended) A method in accordance with ~~Claim 13~~ Claim 11 wherein:

the first layer comprises polytetrafluoroethylene fibers and glass fibers;

the second layer comprises glass fibers;

the third layer comprises polytetrafluoroethylene fibers and glass fibers; and

the glass fibers are coated with an epoxy sizing.

18. (original) A method in accordance with Claim 17 wherein carbon fibers are substituted for the glass fibers.

19. (original) A method in accordance with Claim 17 wherein quartz fibers are substituted for the glass fibers.

20. (original) A method in accordance with Claim 17 wherein a silane sizing is substituted for the epoxy sizing.